DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 370 191 EA 025 822

AUTHOR Grover, Kenneth L.
TITLE A Study of First Year Elementary Principals and Their Mentors in the New York City Public Schools.
PUB DATE Apr 94
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 4-8, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Characteristics; Administrator Responsibility; *Administrator Role; Elementary Education; Interprofessional Relationship; *Mentors; *Principals; *Public Schools
IDENTIFIERS *New York City Board of Education

ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that examined the effectiveness of a New York City mentoring program in meeting the needs of first-year principals. Data were derived from: (1) a survey of 44 out of 109 new elementary school principals who participated in the Bank Street College of Education mentoring program in New York City; (2) a focus group interview with four elementary school principals who described their mentoring experiences as helpful; (3) in-depth interviews with five elementary school principals who reported positive mentoring experiences; and (4) interviews with Bank Street College personnel. A majority of the new principals reported that mentoring was a helpful experience. Factors that affected program productivity centered on structure and mentor characteristics. Structural considerations included scheduling, site, group size, confidentiality, and agenda. A helpful mentor possessed knowledge of the school system had experience as an administrator and superintendent, and was resourceful, accessible, and trustworthy. (Contains 88 references.) (LMI)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 370 191

# A Study of First Year Elementary Principals and Their Mentors in the New York City Public Schools

by

Kenneth L. Grover

Hofstra University

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of

the American Educational Research Association

April 1994 - New Orleans

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K. Grover

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

EA025888



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Daresh (1986) predicted that there would be substantial numbers of new principals in the foreseeable future due to such factors as early retirement incentives, increases in student enrollment, and decreases in the number of people entering the field of professional education. This proved true in New York City when, in June 1991, the Board of Education offered a retirement incentive which provided an additional three years of pension credit to principals. Two hundred seventeen principals opted for the retirement incentive: 26 high school principals, 42 junior high school principals and 149 elementary school principals. Many of these vacancies would be filled with inexperienced personnel - men and women assuming the responsibilities of the principalship for the first time. The Graduate School of Bank Street College of Education implemented a mentoring program for many of these elementary school principals, funded by the New York City Board of Education and the Ford Foundation, to help them cope with their new assignments. Mentoring, the assignment of an experienced administrator to a novice administrator to provide guidance and assistance, is one form of support for first year principals.

The mentoring program began in the Fall of 1991, when Bank Street contacted the 32 local Community Superintendents in the New York City Public School System and inquired as to whether they would like to participate in an advisement / mentoring program for their newly assigned elementary school and middle school/junior high school principals. A vast majority of the Superintendents agreed to participate in the program. The program was designed with two main components, an advisor (mentor) / advisee component and a "buddy" principal component.

The advisor / advisee component of the program was designed so that a retired

New York City principal works with newly assigned principals within each local school district. An advisor can be assigned to cover more than one district. The advisor, usually a retired principal from one of the community school districts, was initially recommended by a Community Superintendent, the Council of Supervisors and Administrators or Bank Street College staff and then selected by Bank Street. S/he worked directly for Bank Street, attended monthly meetings at Bank Street and was responsible for all paperwork and communication with the new principals. The advisees were newly assigned principals who had been selected by their Community Superintendents to participate in the program. As part of the design, the advisor would meet individually with each advisee for 2-3 hours per month at the advisee's school. In addition, the advisor was to meet with all of the district's advisees for 2-3 hours, once a month, either during school hours or after school. In many districts, the advisees were to have easy accessibility to the advisors at any time during the month in order to provide for better communication between the parties, in addition to helping the new principal develop a support system. Topics for discussion between advisor and advisee were to include general leadership theory, curriculum, reflective practice, coping with change, effective communication strategies, self maintenance, district policies, procedures and practices, and professional growth. Regarding the Bank Street program, Lonnetta Gaines (1991) stated that the "leadership advisor has the delicate task of recognizing the needs of individuals and the immediate concerns of the group, while situating these needs and concerns in a broader social, political, and moral context" (p. 61).

The design of the "buddy" principal component of the program assigns new principals to established, tenured principals in the local school district. "Buddy" principals were selected in school districts by various personnel: the district's advisor/mentor, the local Community Superintendent and/or recommendation by other

individuals. Participation in the "buddy" principal component was optional for districts. The assignment of new principals to a "buddy" principal, in some districts, was made by the district advisor. New principals were encouraged to consult with their "buddy" principals on district policies, procedures and practices. In some districts, "buddy" principals were invited to attend monthly meetings with advisors and advisees. In general, there were no specific guidelines established for "buddy" principals and different configurations and practices developed in each district. For the purpose of this study, the "buddy' principal relationship will not be examined.

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of first year principals in this mentoring program to determine if mentoring was effective in meeting the principals' needs.

## Review of Literature

### New Principalship

Succession to the principalship is important and new principals need support if they are going to be successful in meeting the challenges ahead. Principals need to realize the depth of knowledge and feelings that are necessary to cope with the first year of the principalship. Bennett (1988) found that "...nothing really prepares you emotionally, intellectually or physically for the experience" (p. 132). Davis (1988) expressed first year feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy. Robertson (1981) noted that "as a student, I read the major theories of administration, memorized the various duties of the principalship, and even practiced administrative skills in simulation exercises. Yet, I never knew what it felt like to be a principal, until I actually became one" (p. 54). Daresh (1986) reported that beginning principals did not truly understand the principalship, even though they had studied it, read about it, talked about and practiced it.

Sosne (1982) noted that "the vast majority of new principals are likely to

experience two sharp emotions: first, elation at having been appointed to the most critical post the schools have to offer; and second, anxiety about their ability to meet the demands of the job" (p. 14). The literature contains other references related to the feelings of first year principals. Erickson, in his preface to Nelson's (1979) article, talked about feelings of frustration and loneliness. Barth (1990) reported the discouraging words of a newly appointed principal:

> The loneliness of the position is more than I expected. I hadn't expected the distance between teachers and between teachers and myself. While I knew there would be some distance, I expected to be playing on the same team and working together. In fact, teachers are not comfortable with the principal entering the coffee room. I find that there are few people to share information with and who seem to have similar concerns and problems (p. 26-7).

Nolan (1987) and Barth (1990) wrote about how the delight of the principalship is tempered with unsureness and aloneness. Bennett (1988) was concerned with a lack of confidence and a lack of support during the first year. Weindling and Earley (1987) observed that headteachers in England experienced feelings of isolation from their peers. Barth (1990) found that "the stress that principals face has increased with the number and variety of their problems" (p. 65).

The first year principal is bombarded with a multitude of issues and problems that affect performance during the "rookie year" (Spradling, 1989). Daresh (1987) observed that principals reported problems and issues in three major areas: role clarification, limitations on technical expertise and socialization to the profession and to a particular school system.

The authority and leadership roles assigned to first year principals are a source of great discomfort to them (Daresh, 1987). One principal observed:

> I knew that I was supposed to be in charge, but I really was unprepared to deal with having real authority and leadership responsibility. I just wasn't comfortable with

it at first (p. 5).

The lack of technical expertise was divided into two areas: mechanical and procedural issues and interpersonal issues (Daresh, 1987). In attempting to explain the difficulty with procedural issues, one elementary school principal remarked:

> I really felt at a loss when I first got into the job - - particularly with learning to cope with all the forms they (the central office) wanted me to fill out at the start of the school year. I didn't know where to start (p. 6).

Similar concerns were noted by new principals as they attempted to cope with interpersonal conflict. As Daresh (1987) reported, one principal already familiar with the school noted:

> I was really surprised with the amount of conflict I saw every day as part of my job - - with kids, with parents, with the central office, and with the teachers. I couldn't seem to please everybody all the time, and I felt I should... It was really disappointing with the teachers - - the people I was part of only last year (p. 7).

During the first year, principals not only develop task competence, but must become part of a unique professional and organizational culture. The principal must undergo a process of professional and organizational socialization in which s/he adapts to the expectations of the organization and the school.

Isolation, loneliness, stress, role ambiguity, and role conflict are some of the socialization problems new principals face. There are many strategies and techniques that may be employed to help new principals overcome the difficulties inherent in socialization and succession. Weindling and Earley (1987), based on their 5 year NFER project concerned with documenting the demands made on heads in their first year of headship, recommended that new heads of schools be part of a planned program of induction/orientation that would include:

a) more time for new appointed managers to visit their new schools:

b) arrangements for outgoing heads to produce full written reports for their successors;
c) carefully planned introductory visits to their new assignments;
d) an induction course;
e) a handbook for new heads;
f) the assignment of experienced mentors (p. 208).

Mentoring is one strategy recommended to facilitate socialization for new principals. A mentoring program is one way to provide guidance, support, and instruction to the new principal. Properly developed and carefully monitored, it is a powerful tool that may be used to bring about more effective school practice (Daresh & Playko, 1990).

Mentoring

> "Those who are called mentors by their students find themselves in the company of some of the finest teachers in history, including Sigmund Freud, the mentor of Carl Jung; Socrates, the mentor of Plato; Aristotle, the mentor of Alexander the Great; Anne Sullivan, the mentor of Helen Keller; Ruth Benedict, the mentor of Margaret Mead; and of course the first mentor whose very name became attached to this role, Mentor" (Gehrke, 1988).

In Greek mythology, Mentor was the servant of Ulysses to whom the king entrusted the care and training of his son, Telemachus. Mentor's responsibilities covered a wide range of developmental aspects in Telemachus' life, not just the "professional side." The comprehensive influence of Mentor was an integral part of what came to be known as mentoring in medieval trade guilds. Guild masters were responsible not only for the professional skills of proteges, but also for their social, religious, and personal habits. Today, with a broader and more immediately available range of potential mentors, the concept has come to be defined in a variety of ways (Shelton, Bishop & Pool, 1991). Clawson (1985), from a business perspective, defined a mentor as primarily a sponsor, one who argues another's case

to senior management. Daresh and Playko (1990), on the other hand, as professional educators, stated that mentoring is the establishment of a personal relationship for the purpose of professional instruction and guidance. Dodgson (1986) described a mentor as a "trusted and experienced counselor who influenced the career development of an associate in a warm, caring and helping relationship" (p.29-30). Hertherington and Barcelo (1985) offered a somewhat different perspective when they suggest using the term "womentoring" when women mentor women. They stated that "women entering professions made up of primarily men in power face several obstacles, much as the formation of an identity as a professional and as a woman professional. The presence of senior women who have 'made it' can be a facilitating factor in the formation of such an identity" (p.12). Shelton, Bishop and Pool (1991) defined a mentor as one "who counsels and guides proteges in their professional journey" (p.24). McNeer (1983) defined mentoring "as a form of adult socialization used to develop organizational leaders" (p.12).

Cohn and Sweeney (1992) related that the business literature clearly indicates that success in management and administration is enhanced through mentoring and that those who are mentored do better than those who are not. Mentor programs for principals and other administrators have been created and are designed to help these individuals overcome the first hurdles in their new jobs (Daresh & Playko,1990). Daresh and Playko (1990) go on to warn us that mentoring for beginning administrators must take into account the complexity and span of influence of the position. We cannot simply set up mentor programs for principals in the same manner as those programs set up for teachers or business executives.

Mentoring is more likely to be effective when certain conditions are met. These include the method(s) of selection and the preparation of the mentor.

Selection of a Mentor. Shelton, Bishop and Pool (1991) note that "generally mentoring selection takes one of three modes: 1) serendipity, 2) mentor seeks out protege, or 3) protege seeks out mentor" (p.26). The selection of mentors is considered to be critical to the effectiveness of the mentoring process (Cohn and Sweeney, 1992). Researchers such as Daresh & Playko (1990) and Cohn & Sweeney (1992), believed that mentors should be selected because of their effectiveness as principals and should be practicing school administrators.

Levinson (1978) identified various mentoring functions which should be considered in the selection of a mentor. The mentor, he maintains, should function as: 1) teacher, enhancing a person's skills and intellectual development; 2) sponsor, using influence to facilitate a person's entry and advancement; 3) host and guide, welcoming the initiate into a new occupational and social world and acquainting her/him with its values, customs, resources, and cast of characters; 4) exemplar, serving as a model that someone admires and seeks to emulate because of her/his virtues and achievements and way of living; and 5) counselor, providing advice and moral support in times of stress. In addition, Levinson stated that the mentor should also function as someone who helps define the newly emerging self by supporting and facilitating a person's dream and by believing in the person and giving the dream her/his blessing. Levinson went on to state that the mentor's primary function is to be a transitional figure.

Hertherington and Barcelo (1985) tell us that when mentors choose proteges, they typically select people like themselves in terms of gender, race, and socio-economic status. Cohn and Sweeney (1992) remind us that the matching of mentor to mentee is very important. Whenever possible, the two should have some voice in the initial matchup. Consideration should be given to gender, ethnicity, race, or cultural background. If at any point the relationship appears not to be working, it should be

abandoned with no negative consequences to either party. The effective mentor should possess a variety of traits, skills and characteristics that enable her/him to develop a successful mentoring relationship with a new principal. These traits, skills and characteristics should encompass:

a) the ability and willingness to teach and coach the new principal in those special skills that the mentor had developed and successfully practiced on the job;
b) an understanding of human dynamics;
c) good oral and written communication skills;
d) administrative expertise;
e) spiritual support and enthusiasm;
f) knowledge of curriculum;
g) a willingness to accept another way of doing things;
h) knowledge of community and district politics and practices;
i) compatibility;
j) modeling the principles of continuous learning and reflection; and
k) decisiveness, clarity of vision and well-developed interpersonal skills and sensitivities. (Cohn & Sweeney, 1990, Daresh & Playko, 1990, Playko, 1990, Shelton, Bishop & Pool, 1991).

Mentor Preparation. Shelton, Bishop and Pool (1991) wrote that "once the mentor is selected, the issue of training arises (p.26). Duke, Isaacson, Sagor and Schmuck (1984) found that preparation programs should discuss unrealistic job expectations and propose solutions to predictable problems as a means of improving socialization and easing potential difficulties in the succession process. This would also be a worthwhile strategy for beginning principals. Mentoring should be characterized as a two-way, interactive activity (Playko, 1990). However, in order for mentoring to succeed, both mentor and mentee must be properly trained and have a clear understanding of the process. Dodgson (1986) argues that mentors must be trained if the program is to be successful. Daresh and Playko (1992) suggest that a mentor training model produce four desired outcomes:

1. an understanding of the basic concept of mentoring for school

administrators, including definitions, strengths and limitations of the practice;

2. a recognition that mentoring can enhance professional growth for school leaders;

3. an appreciation of the skills needed to carry out an effective administrative mentoring program and the ability to practice these skills in a "safe" learning environment;

4. the formulation of an action plan to guide the implementation of a mentoring program for a school system and the development of a personalized relationship with a protege.

Daresh and Playko (1992) write that the training model should be constructed to include five domains, each one equal in importance and interdependent on the others. The components are as follows:

1. Orientation to Mentoring

   Discussion of alternative definitions of mentoring and some of the operational issues associated with mentoring.

2. Instructional Leadership Skills

   Emphasis on mentoring as a form of teaching, wherein learning is dependent upon the clarity of the desired content of the learning activity.

3. Human Relations Skills

   Overview of adult learning trends and issues with emphasis on appreciation of mentee's unique learning needs as an adult. Also, consideration of different personality and social styles in the establishment of a mentoring relationship.

4. Mentor Process Skills

   Analysis of problem finding and problem solving strategies, reflective practice skills and interviewing and observation techniques.

5. Contextual Realities and District Needs

> Awareness that mentoring is tailored to needs, expectations, and conditions of local school system. Review of issues and concerns unique to the individual school district.

Barnett (1990) felt that "one way to increase the likelihood that mentors and interns focus on meaningful aspects of school administration is to allow them to observe and provide feedback to one another using processes such as shadowing and reflective interviewing. These processes permit mentors and interns to deal with the realities of school administration, using observed experiences as the basis for reflection and behavior change" (p.23).

## Statement of Purpose

The literature regarding mentoring is largely prescriptive. There is little research to document the effectiveness of mentoring programs for new principals. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of first year principals in mentoring programs to determine if mentoring is effective in meeting the principals' needs. The study will specifically examine whether mentoring programs are effective in meeting the needs of first year elementary principals and, also, under what conditions they are effective and how they should be structured.

## Methods

The study consists of four phases: 1) a survey of all elementary school principals participating in the Bank Street College of Education Mentoring Program, 2) focus group interview, 3) in-depth interviews with selected principals, and 4) interviews with Bank Street personnel.

### Survey

The purpose of the survey was to gather information regarding the principals' perceptions of their mentoring experiences. Specifically:

1. Helpfulness of the mentoring program relative to specific needs: e.g., developing a vision, goals, and inter-personal and problem solving skills; planning/implementing programs; increasing technical expertise; understanding District policies and practices; establishing contacts and reducing uncertainty, frustration, isolation and stress.

2. The mentors' skills and preparation: their understanding of mentor role, knowledge of school system, administrative/supervisory expertise, sensitivity and communication skills.

3. Compatibility between mentor and principal in the areas of philosophy, vision, leadership style, and personality.

4. Number and type of monthly contacts between mentor and principal.

The survey, which was mailed to 109 new elementary school principals in New York City, was used to generate a list of possible candidates for in-depth interviews. All responses were categorized into five areas, ranging from "not helpful" to "extremely helpful", relative to the respondents' overall view of her/his mentoring experience. Questions 1 and 2 used a Likert type scale as follows: 1-not helpful, 2-somewhat helpful, 3-helpful, 4-very helpful, and 5-extremely helpful. Questions 3 and 4 used a Likert type scale as follows: 1-poor, 2-fair, 3-good and 4-excellent.

Interviews

A focus group interview was conducted prior to the in-depth interviews. The focus group was comprised of four elementary school principals whose mentoring experiences ranged from "somewhat helpful" to "extremely helpful." The purpose of the focus group interview was to refine the interview questions so that they would better meet the needs of the study.

In-depth interviews have been conducted, so far, with five elementary school principals whose mentoring experiences were either least positive or most positive.

The purpose of the interview was to develop a more detailed description of the mentoring program from the perspective of the individual principal. The interview questions focused on the following areas: activities and services provided by the mentoring program, helpfulness of the mentoring program in meeting the principal's needs, specific kinds of support the mentoring program provided, and how the mentoring experience affected the principal as a professional.

Survey Findings

As previously noted, the survey was mailed to 109 new elementary school principals in New York City. A total of 44 surveys have been returned up to this point. The number of male principal-male mentor, male principal-female mentor, female principal-female mentor and female principal-male mentor pairings was equal. Principals' responses regarding the helpfulness of the mentoring program ranged from "not helpful" to "extremely helpful" with a breakdown of the responses as follows: 3-not helpful, 6-somewhat helpful, 13-helpful, 17-very helpful, and 5-extremely helpful.

Most principals felt that mentoring was helpful to them in their first year of the principalship. They found, however, that the mentoring program was more helpful in meeting some needs than others. Specifically, in rank order, reducing isolation, reducing uncertainty, reducing frustration, establishing contacts, increasing technical expertise, and reducing stress were viewed as most helpful. The mentoring program was least helpful, in rank order, in developing a vision, developing interpersonal skills, developing goals, developing problem solving skills, planning/implementing programs, and understanding District policies/practices.

New principals regarded their mentors as most helpful in the areas of knowledge of the school system, sensitivity, administrative/supervisory expertise, and communication skills. Least helpful areas included acting as a sounding board for new ideas, understanding of mentor role, and as a resource for materials and

research. In addition, a majority of the principals felt that they were compatible with their mentors.

Principals and mentors were in contact with each other more than five times per month. The telephone and individual meetings were the most frequent methods of contact between mentor and principal. A group meeting was held once a month, during which time principals and the district mentor met.

Comments by principals on their mentoring experiences were noted on 32 of the 44 surveys received. Favorable comments were concerned with: professionalism and knowledge of the mentor, breaking the sense of isolation, discussions in private forums, establishing networks, providing opportunities for feedback and skills development, and attending monthly discussion groups. Unfavorable comments dealt with: poorly prepared mentors with less supervisory experience than the principal, too many constraints on time to participate, an already established support system in district, and an overall feeling that this type of experience was not helpful. One principal stated, "I did not feel the need for this type of mentoring."

Interview Findings

The interviews with the principals provided the following information regarding the mentoring program, the mentor, and the impact of the mentoring experience.

The Mentoring Program. The plan for the mentoring program called for a single mentor to work with each group of new principals within a participating New York City Community School District. The mentors were usually retired, former New York City principals who worked with the new principals for the entire school year. However, in some situations, principals worked with two different mentors, one per semester. In one District, mentors were active principals within the District; one was a successful principal and the other the CSA District Chairperson. (CSA is the Council of Supervisors and Administrators and is the union that represents all supervisors and

administrators in New York City.)

Individual and group meetings were conducted on a monthly basis. Individual meetings took place at the new principal's school with the mentor. Group meetings most often occurred during the school day at different schools within the District. Participants had the opportunity to "see things in action" and have the positive experience of "being exposed to other schools during the school day." They were able to look at different schools and bring back to their own schools ideas concerning bulletin boards, special programs, staffing and scheduling. One principal stated, "going to other schools is wonderful."

However, for some group members, meeting during the school day was inconvenient. They were concerned about "being pulled out of their buildings" too frequently. Others felt that there should have been more flexibility about the meeting schedule and that some of the meetings should have been held after school. One participant stated, "sometimes my mind was not on the meeting. I was worried about what was happening in the building. I didn't always pay the attention I should have to what was presented."

In some cases, interdistrict meetings were held. Principals were able to share ideas and as one principal noted, "...we met with people who were working in districts whose pupil population was quite different, and also, more professionally stable than our district."

Principals and mentors met, in some districts, after the school day and found the group meetings a place to network and share ideas and problems. One group started meeting in the District Office and then alternated between the two mentors' schools. Group size ranged from six to sixteen new principals per group. Some groups included the participating senior "buddy" principals and some did not. In the largest group, consisting of sixteen new principals and four senior principals, some

participants felt that the group was too large. They felt that the group would have been more effective if it was smaller and broken up according to a natural geographic boundary.

Agendas for the monthly meetings covered a variety of topics. There were discussions of common problems, daily problems encountered in the school building, basic administrative matters, District reports and requirements and end of year reports/calendars. Some groups of principals suggested topics for the monthly meetings, while others allowed the mentor to present her/his topics. In one District, descriptive reviews on such topics as a school's reading program, school based management and an uncooperative assistant principal were presented and discussed for the entire session. In addition, there were many discussions on topical issues and current trends in education.

Some principals were not satisfied with their monthly meetings. They felt that there was no structure to the meetings, that they needed some organization and, in one case, lacked an agenda entirely. The individual meetings between the principals and the mentors gave the principals an opportunity to deal confidentially with the mentors and discuss problems specific to their schools. These included discussions of construction problems, problems with parents, unsatisfactory teachers, training of new assistant principals, improvement of reading/math programs, funded programs and school based management. Conversations between mentor and principal were dependent on the needs of the principal/school at that particular time of the visit.

Principals were not always pleased with the individual meetings with their mentors. Some of the principals felt that, after a while, the visits started to become an infringement on their time. Others stated that the visits were unstructured and "there wasn't anything for us to talk about." One principal said, "Sometimes they would come and want to chat. I don't have time to chat on the job, there's just too much to do."

The Mentor. As previously stated, mentors were usually retired principals who had worked in the New York City School System. Some worked in the district from which they retired and others worked in different districts throughout the city. A few of the mentors were active principals within the district in which they mentored new principals.

An analysis of the five principals interviewed and their mentors with reference to their ethnicity and sex revealed the following pairings:

| Mentor-Ethnicity/Sex | Principal-Ethnicity/Sex |
|---|---|
| Caucasian Female | Caucasian Male |
| African-American Male | African-American Male |
| Caucasian Female | Caucasian Male |
| Caucasian Female | Caucasian Female |
| African-American Male | Caucasian Female |

Gender and ethnicity of mentors and principals appeared to have no impact on the effectiveness of the mentoring experience.

Principals spoke about their mentors possessing certain characteristics that enabled them to have effective mentoring experiences. These characteristics include:

1. Being Knowledgeable - understanding the workings of the school system and suggesting alternate ways to solve problems and address issues. One principal stated, "when you ask a question, you know you are going to get an intelligent answer."

2. Being Experienced - having been through many of the situations new principals faced and were able to give input. One principal described her mentor as having experienced eyes, able to see many things missed by the principal.

3. Being Supportive - having the ability to guide new principals through many different experiences in a caring, nurturing manner. Mentors served as resources for the groups by providing materials, i.e., journal articles, for group discussions and for individual needs within each school.

4. Being Reliable / Flexible - adapting programs and schedules to meet

the needs of the new principals. One principal noted that "she'll switch topics at meetings if we need her to." In addition, most principals could rely on their mentors to keep scheduled visits and meetings.

5. Being Accessible - being available to principals during the school day, as well as before and after school.

6. Being Trustworthy - being an independent individual with no allegiances to district - able to maintain confidentiality so that principals could be "very open in what we say."

While most principals were positive about their experiences with their mentors, some principals had negative feelings. One principal felt that the mentor was "not always realistic about how she presents herself. She gave too many illustrations of what she did." Another made the new principal feel "defeated and inadequate." Other complaints about the mentors included the fact that they didn't come at a consistent time and that they didn't have any specific plans for their meetings.

Impact. The impact of the mentoring experience on the new principals can help to be explained by looking at some of the major outcomes or effects experienced by the new principals. These can be categorized as:

1. Networking - New principals were able to develop a network, within the district's group, and share with their colleagues. Principals "used each other as a sounding board" and "vented with each other." A strong sense of collegiality developed within the group.

2. Increased Knowledge - Principals acquired knowledge in a variety of areas about a variety of topics. This included how to improve different program in the school, how to train teachers and supervisors, and how to look at problems and goals using alternative strategies.

3. Awareness - Principals developed a greater understanding of the scope of their jobs, and the ability to view their schools using different lenses. Being mentored helped them realize that their problems were not unique and that they were not

alone. One principal noted that she became a "more awake principal" and another said, "I am aware. My eyes are open."

4. Confidence - The mentoring experience gave principals more confidence in their ability to run their buildings. It was a validating experience for many and provided them with a stronger sense of self-worth.

5. Adoption of Ideas - Principals were able to bring back to their schools many ideas from other schools and, in some cases, from other districts. They had an opportunity to get the "feel of other buildings" and see how different ideas could be used in their schools.

6. Professional Growth - Principals experienced professional growth by exposure to more research, more journal articles, and more workshops. One principal said it, "caused me to join ASCD." Others felt that by reading more and reflecting more on what they read and do, they have demonstrated growth.

7. Focus - Principals had to focus their energies on both the school and themselves. They had to move from merely examining issues and ideas to implementing plans of action. One principal said, "It literally taught me how to sit down and plan out exactly what I wanted to do."

8. New Experiences - Principals encountered many new areas and issues with which they were not familiar. These included legal and human relations issues, as well as encounters with the District Office.

9. Understanding District Policies and Practices - Principals gained a greater understanding of what was expected of them by the District Office. They also acquired knowledge about specific programs in which their school participated.

## Discussion

The preliminary findings of the study, based on data from the mailed survey and the in-depth interviews, indicated that a majority of new principals found mentoring to be a helpful experience during their first year in the principalship.

The effectiveness of the mentoring experience for a new principal appears to be directly related to the structure of the mentoring program and the capability of the mentor. The experience will be most productive when both elements are strong and less productive when one or both of them are not. New principals noted key differences in their mentoring experiences as they pertained to their mentors. In effective mentoring experiences, principals found that the mentors had positive attitudes about their roles and were well prepared for both the group and individual meetings.

The mentoring program should be structured to include both group and individual meetings for new principals. Group meetings should give careful consideration to:

1. Scheduling - Meetings should take place once a month during the first year. Also, flexibility in the meeting schedule is necessary. Meetings can be held during the school day or after school. All participants should be apprised of meetings by means of a published schedule.

2. Sites - Meetings can be either intra-district or inter-district. They can be held at different schools on a rotating basis.

3. Size of Group - Group size must be such that all members have the opportunity to participate in all discussions.

4. Confidentiality - All conversations must be strictly confidential if individuals are going to share with one another. There must be a high level of trust among all group members.

5. Agendas - Carefully planned agendas are essential to the process. These should be cooperatively developed and encompass topics relevant to the needs of the participants. However, agendas should be flexible enough to cover any contingencies that might arise.

Individual meetings between mentors and new principals should be prearranged and occur once a month. Additional meetings and/or other methods of

contact can be set up as necessary. The meetings should be structured and divided into several parts. One part of the meeting should cover the general functioning of the school, while another part should focus on a predetermined topic. The principal and the mentor should be prepared to discuss the topic at length and see it to some sort of closure. Parts of future meetings can be devoted to reflecting on prior discussions and decisions.

Individuals should be selected as mentors who possess certain characteristics that enable them to be successful. These include:

1. Having an extensive knowledge of the school system
2. Being an experienced administrator and supervisor
3. Being supportive and willing to serve as a resource
4. Being reliable and flexible
5. Being accessible
6. Being trustworthy

New principals were better able to cope with their first year assignments and responsibilities as a result of their mentoring experiences. In many cases, mentoring helped principals establish a solid foundation upon which they built an organization that was more responsive to their own needs as well as to the needs of its members.

Bibliography

Aldrich, B.H. (1984, September). All decisions great and small. Principal, pp. 31- 35.

Barnett, B.G. (1990). Peer-assisted leadership: Expanding principals' knowledge through reflective practice. Journal of Educational Administration, 28(3), 67-76.

Barnett, B.G. (1985). Peer-assisted leadership: Using research to improve practice. The Urban Review pp. 47-64.

Barnett, B.G. (1990, May). The mentor-intern relationship: Making the most of learning from experience. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 17-24.

Barth, R.S. (1990). Improving schools from within. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Barth, R.S. (1985). Principal centered professional development. Chicago, IL: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 254 946)

Bennett, K.S. (1988, September). What about me?...Reflections from a first-year principal. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 132-134.

Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and method. New York : John Wiley and Sons.

Cabrera, R.G., & Sours, M.V. (1989, September). Helpful hints for first-year principals. Principal, pp. 22-24.

Clawson, J.G. (1985). Is mentoring necessary? Training and Development Journal, 39(4), 36-39.

Cohn, K.C., & Sweeney, R.C. (1992, April). Principal mentoring programs: Are school districts providing the leadership? Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Daly-Lewis, J. (1987, September). Getting through year one. Principal, pp. 54-55.

Daresh, J.C. (1988, November). Collegial support: A lifeline for the beginning principal. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 84-87.

Daresh, J.C. (1986). Coming on board: Characteristics of the beginning principalship. Chicago, IL: Mid-Western Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 275 048)

Daresh, J.C. (1985 ). Field-based educational administration training programs. Planning & Changing, pp. 107-118.

Daresh, J.C. (1982). Principals' perceptions of collegial support as a component of administrative inservice. Chicago, IL: Midwestern Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 292 177)

Daresh, J.C. (1986, Summer ). Support for beginning principals: First hurdles are highest. Theory into Practice, pp. 168-173.

Daresh. J.C. (1987). The beginning principalship: Preservice and inservice implications. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 280 196)

Daresh, J.C. (1987). The highest hurdles for the first year principal. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 280 136)

Daresh, J.C., Conran, P., & Playko, M.A. (1989). Mentoring for leadership development. Orlando, FL: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 304 775)

Daresh, J.C., & Playko, M.A. (1990, September). Mentor programs: Focus on the beginning principal. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 73-77.

Daresh, J.C., & Playko, M.A. (1990, April). Mentoring for effective school administration. Urban Education, pp. 43-54.

Daresh, J.C. & Playko, M. A. (1992, February). Preparing administrators to serve as professional development mentors. A paper presented at the annual meeting of AASA, conference within a convention, San Diego, CA.

Daresh, J.C., & Playko, M.A. (1992, April). What do beginning leaders need? Aspiring and practicing principals' perceptions of critical skills for novice administrators. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Davis, S.H. (1988, December). Life in the fishbowl: Revelations and reflections of the first year. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 74-83.

Dillman, D.A. (1978). Mail and telephone surveys: The total design method. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Dodgson, J. (1986, Spring). Do women in education need mentors? Education Canada, pp. 28-33.

Duke, D.L., Isaacson, N.S., Sagor, R., & Schmuck, P.A. (1984). Transition to leadership: An investigation of the first year of the principalship. Portland, OR: Lewis and Clark College, Transition to Leadership Project.

Fowler, D.L. (1982). Mentoring relationships and the perceived quality of the academic work environment. Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, & Counselors, 45(3), 27-33.

Gaines, L. (1991). Developing collaborative leaders: Reflections on leadership advisement at Bank Street College. Journal of the Graduate School of Bank Street College of Education,3(1), 55-63.

Garberina, M.R. (1980). Rites of passage: Role socialization among novice principals. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 208 459)

Gehrke, N.J. (1988). On preserving the essence of mentoring as one form of teacher leadership. Journal of Teacher Education, 39(1), 43-45.

Gehrke, N.J. (1988, Summer). Toward a definition of mentoring. Theory into Practice, pp. 190-194.

Gibble, J.L., & Lawrence, J.D. (1987, November). Peer coaching for principals. Educational Leadership, pp. 48-49.

Gray, W.A., & Gray, M.M. (1985, November). Synthesis of research on mentoring beginning teachers. Educational Leadership, pp. 37-43.

Groves, Barry. (1990, April). Protocols for new principals: A strategy for success. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 92-95.

Hall, G.E., & Mani, M.N.G. (1989, April). Entry strategies of first-time high school principals. San Francisco, CA: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 314 863)

Hart, A.W. (1991). Leader succession and socialization: A synthesis. Review of Educational Research, 61(4), 451-474.

Hart, A.W. (1987). Leadership succession: Reflections of a new principal. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 20(4), 1-11.

Hart, A.W. (1993). Principal succession: Establishing leadership in schools. New York: State University of New York Press.

Hennig, M., & Jardim, A. (1981). The managerial woman. New York: Anchor Books.

Hetherington, C., & Barcelo, R. (1985). Womentoring: A cross-cultural perspective. Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, & Counselors, 49(1), 12-15.

Hughes, L.W., & Ubben, G.C. (1984). The elementary principal's handbook: A guide to effective action. Newton: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Husen, P.M. (1990). An innovative principal preparation program: A structural approach. Los Angeles, CA: National Council of Professors of Educational Administration. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 327 974)

Jentz, B.C., Cheever,Jr., D.S., Fisher, S.B., Jones, M.H., Kelleher, P., & Wofford, J.W. (1982). Entry: The hiring, start-up, and supervision of administrators. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company.

Jentz, B.C., Cheever,Jr., D.S., & Fisher, S.B. (1980, March). How to survive your first year: A guide for new principals. The National Elementary Principal, pp. 23-26.

Keaster, R.D. (1990). Leadership in educational administration development: The Louisiana administrative internship. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 328 987)

Keele, R.L., & DeLaMare-Schaefer, M. (1984). So what do you do now that you didn't have a mentor? Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, & Counselors, 47(3), 36-40.

Kelleher, P. (1982, September). A bad beginning as principal. Principal, pp. 10-13.

Kline, W.A. (1987, November). A collegial approach to developing leadership. Educational Leadership, pp. 46-47.

Kram, K.E. (1983). Phases of the mentor relationship. Academy of Management Journal, 26, 608-624.

Leithwood, K.A., Begley, P.T. & Cousins, J.B. (1990). The nature, causes and consequences of principals' practices: An agenda for future research. Journal of Educational Administration, 28(4), 5-31.

Levinson, D.J., Darrow, C.N., Klein, E.B., Levinson, M.H., & McKee, B. (1978). The seasons of a man's life. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

McIntyre, H. (1985, April). Setting the tone for your school: Advice for the first year principal. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 85-90.

McNeer, E.J. (1983). Two opportunities for mentoring: A study of women's career development in higher education administration. Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, & Counselors, 47(1), 8-14.

Merriam, S. (1983). Mentors and Proteges: A criticial review of the literature. Adult Education Quarterly, 33, 161-173.

Merton, R.K. (1967). On theoretical sociology. New York: The Free Press.

Mertz, N.T., & Others. (1989, March). Mentoring for administrative advancement: A study of what mentors do and think. San Francisco, CA: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 307 669).

Miskel, C., & Cosgrove, D. (1985). Leader succession in school settings. Review of Educational Research, 55(1), 87-105.

Monane, J.H. (1967). A sociology of social systems. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Nelson, M. (1979). Looking back at the first year: A "veteran" principal's view. [OSSC Bulletin 22,(6)]. Eugene: University of Oregon, Oregon School Study Council.

Nolan, M.A.C. (1990). First year principals: Expectations and realities. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Hofstra University.

Nolan, M.A.C. (1987). The first year: Women in the principalship. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 284 326)

Papalewis, R., Jordan, M., Cuellar, A., Gaulden, J., & Smith, J. (1991). Preparing school administrators for the culturally and linguistically diverse: A formal mentor training program in progress. Chicago, IL: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 333 094)

Parkay, F.W. & Hall, G.E. (1992). Becoming a principal: The challenges of beginning leadership. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

Pavan, B.N. (1986, April). Mentors and mentoring functions perceived as helpful to certified aspiring and incumbent female and male public school administrators. San Francisco, CA: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 269 884).

Pence, L.J. (1989). Mentorship program for aspiring and new school administrators. Eugene: University of Oregon, Oregon School Study Council. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 304 795)

Peterson, K.D. (1985). Obstacles to learning from experience and principal training. Urban Review, pp. 189-200.

Pitts, E. (1982, November). "We're number one!" How a first-year principal won South Carolina's "finest" award. Principal, pp. 14-20.

Playko, M.A. (1990, May). What it means to be mentored. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 29-33.

Richardson, M.D., & Prickett, R.L. (1991). A comprehensive evaluation of Kentucky's beginning principal intern program. Chicago, IL: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 331 159)

Robertson, L. (1981, September). The first year. Principal, pp. 54-55.

Schneider, A.M. (1991). Mentoring women and minorities into positions of educational leadership: Gender differences and implications for mentoring. Houston, TX: Annual Conference of the National Council of States on Inservice Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 344 843)

Seifert, E.H. (1981, September). How to be a successful new principal. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 56-58.

Sergiovanni, T.J. (1987). The principalship: A reflective practice perspective. Newton: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Shelton, M., Bishop, H., & Poole, B. (1991, Spring/Summer). Mentoring: A synthesis of research. Record in Educational Administration and Supervision, pp.24-30.

Shute, R.W., Webb, C.D., & Thomas, G.J. (1989). Implications of preparing school administrators: Mentoring. San Francisco, CA: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 311 581)

Sosne, H.L. (1982, September). Advice to rookies: Dos and don'ts for making that first year successful. Principal, pp. 14-17.

Spradling, R.C. (1989, November). The rookie year: We can make principalship induction less traumatic. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 68-75.

Sussman, L. (1986). The principal's first year: The mutual process of developing leadership. San Francisco, CA: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 277 149)

Swoboda, M.J., & Millar, S.B. (1986). Networking-mentoring: Career strategy of women in academic administration. Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, & Counselors, 50(1), 8-13.

Van Maanen, J. (1978). People processing. Organizational Dynamics, pp.18-36.

Weindling, D., & Earley, P. (1987). The first years of headship - towards better practice. Educational Research, 29(3), 202-212.